

Media Release

Yavapai County Sheriff's Office

Scott Mascher – Sheriff

255 E. Gurley Street, Prescott, AZ 86301

Dwight D'Evelyn - Media Coordinator

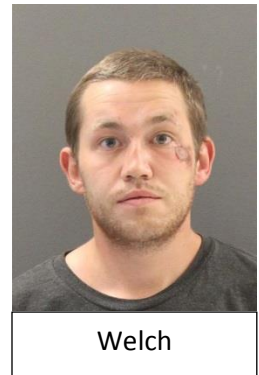
928-777-7441



August 15, 2016 – Recent Incidents Overview

DUI suspect arrested after Ramming Patrol Vehicle / Critical Rescue on Mingus Mountain

On August 12, 2016, around 5:30AM, a YCSO supervisor was traveling east on Gurley Street near Marina Street, Prescott, at about 30 mph. At this time, a white Honda passed his fully marked patrol vehicle doing more than 60 mph as measured by a traffic radar device. When the deputy tried to stop the Honda, it fled south on Bradshaw Drive from Gurley Street, eventually jumping a curb and colliding with a tree near the Compass Bank. The driver then continued south until stopping at the corner of Bradshaw Street and Goodwin Street. As the deputy pulled behind the Honda, the Honda's driver revved his engine, put the Honda in reverse, and intentionally rammed the patrol vehicle. The uncooperative driver, later identified as 22-year-old Eric Welch from Prescott, refused to follow commands. The deputy approached Welch and was able to forcibly remove him from the vehicle and take him into custody before he could drive away.



During a search of Welch's clothing, the deputy found marijuana 'dabs,' which is a form of highly concentrated cannabis. Welch freely admitted consuming 6 beers while smoking several 'dabs' around 4 AM that morning before driving. Fortunately, the deputy was not injured and his actions to detain the suspect likely prevented harm to innocent motorists driving in the area. Officers from the Prescott Police Department arrived to assist by handling the traffic collision portion of the investigation.

Welch was booked on charges including Flee pursuing Law Enforcement Officer, Aggravated Assault on Law Enforcement, Assault with a Deadly Weapon, Criminal Damage, DUI drugs/alcohol, and Possession of a Dangerous Drug and Paraphernalia – including scales, grinder, pipes, and a propane torch. His breath test showed twice the legal limit. Welch remains in the Camp Verde Detention Center on a \$30,000 bond.

On August 11, 2016, just after 2 AM, YCSO deputies were dispatched to Mingus Mountain regarding a 60-year-old woman who was lost. She had been camping in the area with her boyfriend and wandered away after a verbal argument with him the prior afternoon. She contacted the dispatch center

by cell phone and was frantic because her phone battery was fading and she was dealing with exposure from a monsoon storm that had just hit the area. She was wet, cold and also caring for 2 small dogs.

Using GPS coordinates obtained via cell phone and her description of nearby landmarks, deputies were able to utilize a 4wheel drive patrol vehicle to access the area. Due to the rugged terrain, deputies began hiking towards the lost party by following the sound of her 2 dogs as they barked throughout the search effort. Just after 4 AM, deputies located the woman and her dogs. Because it was unsafe for her to walk out, deputies cleared a path to allow access by the 4-wheel drive patrol vehicle. This included removal of a large tree in the pathway and extremely cautious driving to reach her safely. She was driven back to base camp for treatment by EMS personnel and then transported to Yavapai Regional Medical Center, east campus, for treatment. It appeared she was suffering from hypothermia, but grateful for the tremendous work of deputies who brought her out of the dark wilderness safely.

Citizens can contact the Yavapai County Sheriff's Office with information or questions at 928-771-3260 or the YCSO website:
www.ycsoaz.gov